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ABSTRACT

Recommendations by the Tennessee Task Force on the Supply of Minority Teachers address the issue of student entry into teacher education. A five-year plan of action includes the following recommendations: (1) support collaboration of the Tennessee Education Association and the Tennessee Department of Education in revitalizing Future Teacher/Young Educator Clubs and in the initiation of a mentoring program for minority students entitled "Partnership to Assist Student Success"; (2) establish Teacher Cadet programs in high schools; (3) provide matching grant programs in support of teacher education projects designed to attract post-high school minority graduates of four-year institutions who work in fields other than education; (4) initiate a Teaching Fellows Service Award Program for talented minority students; (5) develop in institutions of higher education programs, curriculum strategies, and practices that enable minority students to enter teacher education and successfully complete requirements for admission to the profession; (6) create a teacher job bank to facilitate responding to the demands of a competitive market for qualified teachers; and (7) institute annual reports to the State Board of Education on supply and demand for teachers, including information on the supply of minority teachers. The benefits and implementation of each recommendation are outlined. (JD)

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TENNESSEE
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REPORT OF THE

TENNESSEE TASK FORCE

ON THE

SUPPLY OF MINORITY TEACHERS

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INTRODUCTION

The policy statement adopted in June 1987 by the Tennessee Advisory Council on Teacher Education asserts that "in order to have schools among the best in the nation, Tennessee must do all that it can to attract capable people into the teaching profession, prepare them well, and ensure that they remain in the profession." This policy statement, approved by the State Board of Education, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and the State Certification Commission in January 1988, cites as a specific goal the development of a "program for recruiting well qualified students, especially black students, into teacher education." This affirming support from the state's major educational governing bodies provides an important backdrop for the work of the Tennessee Task Force on the Supply of Minority Teachers.

Nationally, it is estimated that only 10 percent of the current teaching force is minority while more than 25 percent of the nation's school children belong to minority groups. It is projected that by 1995 the nation's minority student population will approach 30 percent with the proportion of minority teachers expected to be less than 5 percent. Currently in Tennessee, black educators represent 11 percent of the classroom teaching force while black students represent 22 percent of the state's public school enrollment. Other minorities (Asian, Native American, Hispanic) are each represented at less than 1 percent of the public school population.

Given these statistics, the number of minority students enrolled in Tennessee teacher education programs is of particular interest. In 1984 black undergraduate teacher education enrollment in public colleges and universities was 9.7 percent. This percentage has dramatically declined since then, so that in 1987 the percentage of blacks in public teacher education programs had dropped to 2.1 percent. This percentage represents a total of 50 persons out of the 2,388 under-graduates training to become teachers in public colleges with teacher education programs. The 1986 data for undergraduate teacher education programs in private institutions showed a black enrollment of 10.2 percent up from 8.7 percent in 1984. This increase represents 116 black teacher education candidates from among the 1,141 undergraduates enrolled in the teacher education programs of private Tennessee colleges and universities. On an aggregate basis, black teacher education candidates represent 5 percent of all teacher education students enrolled in public and private Tennessee programs.

Among the problems that affect the attraction of minorities to a career in education, the Task Force expressed major concern for the decline in the number of minority students going to college. In addition, competitive salaries, working conditions, upward mobility for black educators, and professional program requirements were noted as influential factors in career decisions. Initial recommendations from an Advisory Council subcommittee that address the issue of student entry to teacher education are encouraging. The Tennessee Task Force on the Supply of Minority Teachers proposes the following five-year (1988-1993) plan of action as a way to "prepare teachers to meet the challenges of educating young people for the future."

SUMMARY

of

RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Support collaboration of the Tennessee Education Association and the Tennessee Department of Education in revitalizing Future Teacher/Young Educator clubs and in the initiation of a mentoring program for minority students entitled Partnership to Assist Student Success.

II. Establish Teacher Cadet program in high schools.

III. Provide matching grant program in support of teacher education projects designed to attract post high school minority candidates and projects designed to attract minority graduates of four-year institutions who work in fields other than education.

IV. Initiate Teaching Fellows Service Award Program for talented minority students.

V. Develop, in institutions of higher education, programs, curriculum strategies, and practices that enable minority students to enter teacher education and successfully complete requirements for admission to the profession.

VI. Create Teacher Job Bank to facilitate responding to the demands of a competitive market for qualified teachers.

VII. Institute annual report to the State Board of Education on supply and demand for teachers, including information on the supply of minority teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I. **Support collaboration of the Tennessee Education Association and the Tennessee Department of Education in revitalizing Future Teacher/Young Educator clubs and in the initiation of a mentoring program for minority students, entitled Partnership to Assist Student Success.**

Benefits

- Increased student interest in teaching as a career.
- Support from education professionals.
- Increased number of minority students preparing for college.
- Improved capability for success in pre-collegiate academic work.
- Improved capability to successfully complete test requirements for entry to teacher education programs.

Implementation

- Program design and implementation as joint initiatives of the Tennessee Department of Education and the Tennessee Education Association.
- Local school district Future Teacher/Young Educator clubs open to all junior high school and senior high school students interested in teaching as a career.
- Support students in their preparation to meet entry standards of the teaching profession through career awareness, self-assessment of academic strengths and weaknesses, involvement in academic enrichment experiences, and enrollment in pre-collegiate academic work.
- Foster climate among elementary and middle school teachers that promotes the use of instructional strategies designed to improve student math and science attitudes, confidence, and competence.
- Involve community organizations, churches, and businesses in promoting teaching as a career.
- Include parents as partners in the educational process.

II. Establish Teacher Cadet program in high schools.

Benefits

- Increase number of high-quality students that plan to enter teacher education programs
- Direct involvement of college of education faculty in public school setting
- Facilitate high school and college teachers working together

Implementation

- Teacher Cadet program will be designed for academically able high school students as an introduction to the teaching profession.
- Program offering will include a model curriculum and opportunities for Cadet students to observe and assist in a variety of educational settings.
- Adequate resources will be required to support curriculum development and the training of Cadet teachers.
- One or more of Tennessee's teacher training institutions will work with local schools to develop and implement a Teacher Cadet program.

III. Provide matching grant program in support of teacher education projects designed to attract post high school minority candidates and projects designed to attract minority graduates of four-year institutions who work in fields other than education.

Benefits

- Expansion of recruitment pool.
- Increased recruitment of minorities from non-education occupations and from the reserve pool.

Implementation

- Grant program administered by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission providing funds to colleges and universities.
- Project initiatives must include resources through matching funds from school systems, universities, foundations, business, and industry.
- Candidates for post high school projects should include teacher aides, substitute teachers, community college students, and non-degreed community residents interested in teaching.
- Target group for college graduates should include persons who have teaching credentials and those who do not have such credentials but are interested in changing careers.
- Institutions will develop curriculum appropriate for mid-career entrants to the teaching profession.
- Approval of appropriate governing bodies.
- Task Force Steering Committee will facilitate the work of school systems, businesses, and teacher training institutions in the development of projects.

IV. Initiate Teaching Fellows Service Award Program for talented minority students.

Benefits

- Enhance status of teaching through recognition of outstanding students.
- Increase likelihood that students will teach in Tennessee for a given period of time.
- Lessen reluctance of students to accept loans.

Implementation

- Service award fellowships for minority students would be granted with a provision for renewal and include a pay-back arrangement based on teaching service in Tennessee.
- In addition to providing service awards, the program will include activities designed to enhance the status of the selected fellows.
- Colleges and universities participating as Teaching Fellow campus sites will include a variety of training experiences and mentoring relationships in their program offering.
- Task Force Steering Committee will initiate discussion with appropriate state officials leading toward the realization of an approved program.

V. Develop, in institutions of higher education, programs, curriculum strategies, and practices that enable minority students to enter teacher education and successfully complete requirements for admission to the profession.

Benefits

- Improved response to complex problems that may impact minority college students.
- Increased positive view of teaching as a career.
- Improved passing rate on pre-professional tests required for entry to teacher education.
- Increased number of minority students entering teacher education.
- Improved preparation of teacher candidates for exit.
- Improved passing rate on teacher certification tests.

Implementation

- The Task Force and other appropriate state agencies will encourage higher education institutions to develop and implement programs related to entry, retention, and completion.
- Programs should indicate the ability of an institution to respond to curriculum needs of "at-risk" students and other minority pipeline issues including advising, mentoring, tutoring, enrichment, financial support, and counseling.
- The Task Force is encouraged by the proposed changes in the utilization of the Pre-Professional Skills Test and awaits the realization of a new National Teachers Exam (NTE) from the Educational Testing Service.

VI. Create Teacher Job Bank to facilitate responding to the demands of a competitive market for qualified teachers.

Benefits

- Enable school systems to effectively expand recruiting capabilities.
- Provide resource of mutual benefit to teachers and school systems.
- Enhance ability to respond to competitive environment for qualified minority teachers

Implementation

- School systems will be invited to list open teaching positions and teachers searching for positions will be encouraged to place resumes on file.
- Track placement of minorities graduating from Tennessee teacher education programs.
- Provide leadership in securing public and private resources in support of recruitment incentives, including financial incentives, to attract minorities to work in Tennessee.
- Administer under Department of Education.

VIII. Institute annual report to the State Board of Education on supply and demand for teachers, including information on the supply of minority teachers.

- The Department of Education and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission will collaborate in refining the database necessary to support annual reporting.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The success of minority students in elementary and secondary schools and its relationship to being college-ready is a major element in the long-term solution to the supply of qualified minority teachers. Attention to assuring successful academic outcomes for minority students is a fundamental issue impacting both new and existing resources. Exploration of ways in which current efforts may be re-directed to gain improved success in pre-collegiate coursework for minorities may be promising. Resources could be marshalled to reach those students not well represented in coursework that is necessary to college success. For example, projects to enhance instructional strategies used by elementary and middle school teachers to facilitate the success of minority students in mathematics could be funded, in part, through Title II of the Education for Economic Security Act.

It is the consensus of the Task Force that efforts to recruit and retain qualified minority teachers require visible leadership from all sectors of the Tennessee community. The call goes out to leaders in business, education, labor, city government, legislative bodies, local boards of education, and civic and church organizations in securing the successful realization of these recommendations. The Task Force also notes that achievement of these critical objectives requires the commitment of state government in providing administrative resources and staff.